

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 10778 081831Z

70

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10778

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PARM, XZ, NO, FR, UR, US, FI, RO

SUBJECT: KEKKONEN VISIT TO USSR AND EUROPEAN COMMUNIST, NORDIC
AND SOVIET LEADERSHIP MARGINALIA

REF: HELSINKI 1378,

1. SUMMARY. KEKKONEN VISIT TO MOSCOW JUNE 20-28 SEEMS, ON
FINNISH TELLING, TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY ROUTINE AND MORE INTERESTING
IN DETAIL THAN IN GENERAL. BREZHNEV DESCRIBED PRESIDENT FORD AS
IN TROUBLE, BUT HAD TO BE REMINDED OF CARTER'S NAME. FINNS
REPORT SOVIETS DID NOT MENTION BERLINGUER, BUT CRITICIZED
ROMANIA AND MARCHAIS. SCANDINAVIAN NFZ DID NOT COME UP, AND
SOVIETS DID NOT SEEM IN A HURRY ON SVALBARD. ON BILATERAL
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 10778 081831Z

ECONOMIC ISSUES HANDLED BY KOSYGIN, FINNS EXPECT 15-YEAR TRADE

AGREEMENT WILL BE CONCLUDED THIS YEAR, PROBABLY DURING FALL GROMYKO VISIT. FINNS HAD IMPRESSION THAT BREZHNEV'S REDUCED CAPABILITIES ARE NOW ROUTINELY HANDLED, THAT KOSYGIN HAD HEARING PROBLEMS BUT WAS OTHERWISE UNIMPAIRED, AND THAT PODGORNYY WAS NEGLECTED BY HIS COLLEAGUES. END SUMMARY.

2. FINNISH DCM AND POL COUNSELEOR HAVE PROVIDED SKETCH WITH SOME DETAILS ON KEKKONEN VISIT TO USSR.

3. ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, KEKKONEN SPENT AN HOUR ALONE WITH BREZHNEV AND AN INTERPRETER, WHICH WAS EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTED TO POLITICS. ON THE WHOLE, BREZHNEV WAS OPTIMISTIC, AND NUANCES WERE IN THE DETAILS. ON U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE, HE DESCRIBED PRESIDENT FORD AS IN TROUBLE, AND THEN HAD TO ASK ABOUT "THAT OTHER MAN, OH YES, CARTER." ON THE MIDDLE EAST, BREZHNEV COMPLAINED ABOUT SADAT'S POSITION, AND EXPOUNDED WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY A WAIT-AND-SEE SOVIET APPROACH. ON CSCE FOLLOWUP, HE WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE BELGRADE MEETING, WHICH THE "ENEMIES OF DETENTE" WISHED TO TRANSFORM INTO A TRIAL. POL COUNSELOR REPORTS THAT SOVIETS SHOWED THEMSELVES PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT ROMANIA DURING THE VISIT.

4. SOVIET VIEWS ON EUROPEAN COMMUNIST ISSUES MAY BE OF INTEREST: SOVIETS DID NOT MENTION BERLINGUER AT ALL, AND WERE TOUGH ON MARCHAIS, ACCORDING TO FINNS. (FRENCH EMBASSY HERE ASCRIBES CURRENT VISIT OF PSF DELEGATION AT INVITATION OF PONOMAREV PARTLY TO DESIRE TO UNDERCUT PCF.)

5. ON NORDIC ISSUES, KEKKONEN PLAN FOR NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE WAS NOT RAISED BY EITHER SIDE, AND CONSEQUENTLY DID NOT APPEAR, AS IN PAST YEAR, IN JOINT STATEMENT. (FINNS SUSPECT ROMANIAN PROMOTION OF BALKAN NFZ HAS DAMPENED SOVIET ARDOR FOR THE CONCEPT IN RECENT YEARS.) POL COUNSELOR SAID FINNS WERE ACTIVELY PROMOTING SALE OF ICEBREAKERS AND PROSPECTING EQUIPMENT ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR ARTIC CONDITIONS, AND SOVIET RETICENCE CONVINCED THEM THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT IN A HURRY, AND DO NOT EXPECT RAPID CONCLUSION, ON SVALBARD NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORWEGIANS, ON WHICH SUCH SALES TO USSR DEPEND.

6. KOSYGIN WAS WITH KEKKONEN SEVERAL HOURS, AND DISCUSSION WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 10778 081831Z

HIM WAS PRIMARILY ECONOMIC, WITH PRESIDENT STRONGLY ENGAGED IN PROMOTING FINNISH ECONOMIC INTERESTS. POL COUNSELOR SAID TWO SIDES HAVE NOW EXCHANGED LISTS OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES THEY WANT INCLUDED IN 15-YEAR TRADE AGREEMENT, WITH FINNS PUSHING SHIPS AND WANTING FUEL AND TIMBER, AND SOVIETS PUSHING MACHINERY. HE WAS NOT SURE HOW LISTS CAN BE RECONCILED, SINCE THERE ARE LIMITS TO HOW MUCH SOVIET MACHINERY FINNS WANT, BUT SAID IT IS EXPECTED AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, PERHAPS

DURING GROMYKO VISIT IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. HE WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR HUNGARIANS HAVE EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED SIMILAR 15-YEAR AGREEMENT, TO 1990, FOR EXPORTS OF THEIR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO USSR, SINCE HE THOUGH FINLAND WAS FIRST.

7. COMMENTING ON SOVIET LEADERSHIP ASPECTS, POL COUNSLEOR SAID BREZHNEV HAD WORN HIS HEARING AID IN ALL MEETINGS AND HAD SEEMED FIT IF AT TIMES A LITTLE SHAKY. IN COMPARISION WITH PAST MEETINGS (WHICH HE HAS BEEN IN ON SINCE 1969) HE HAD IMPRESSION THAT BREZHNEV'S REDUCED CAPABILITIES ARE NOW BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE, WHEREAS BEFORE THEY WERE STILL SURPRISING AND DISCONCERTING TO SOVIETS. KOSYGIN SHOWED IS AGE FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH A HEARING PROBLEM WHICH MADE HIM REQUEST (AND APOLOGIZE FOR) REPEATED INTERPRETATION AT SOME POINTS, BUT HIS FABULOUS MEMORY AND INTELLIGENCE WERE UNIMPAIRED, SINCE HE REELED OFF REAMS OF FIGURES, AS USUAL, WITHOUT CONSULTING HIS BRIEFING PAPERS. PODGORNYY ARRIVED LATE FOR THE TRAIN AS KIKKONEN PULLED INTO MOSCOW, AND WAS UNIMPRESSIVE--AND EVEN NEGLECTED BY HIS COLLEAGUES--THROUGHOUT. SOURCE WAS SHOCKED TO SEE TASS REPORT HIM PRESENT FOR AN EVENT HE DID NOT ATTEND. HOWEVER, ALL THREE WERE AT KEKKONEN' DINNER, IN A RARE SHOW OF RESPECT.

8. COMMENT: VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MORE INTERESTING IN DETAIL THAN IN GENERAL, AND WE SUSPECT LOCAL FINNS CAN BE TAKEN AT THEIR WORD WHEN THEY CLAIM COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ABOUT INTENSIFICATION OF POLITICAL RELATIONS MEANS NOTHING. SINCE KEKKONEN, TOO, IS SHOWING SIGNS OF WEAR AT HIS AGE, THEY DO NOT TAKE ROUTINIZATION OF BREZHNEV'S REDUCED POWERS VERY SERIOUSLY, AND, HERE TOO, WE RESPECT THEIR JUDGEMENT.
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